

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /071 W

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R 071555Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6294

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USMISSION OECD PARIS

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PDEV, UK

SUBJECT: CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS: DEADLOCK CONTINUES, BUT
TEMPERS COOL

REF: LONDON 14799

1. HOUSE OF COMMONS NOVEMBER 6 AGAIN REJECTED LORDS
AMENDMENTS TO TRADE UNION AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS BILL
ON "PRESS FREEDOM" ISSUE (REFTEL), RETURNING THE BILL
ONCE MORE TO THE UPPER HOUSE FOR RECONSIDERATION. WHILE
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THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT POSITION AND THAT OF

OPPOSITION AND CROSSBENCH LORDS HAS BEEN NARROWED, FEW OBSERVERS ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE UPPER HOUSE WILL ACQUIRE. IN THEORY AT LEAST, SUFFICIENT TIME REMAINS IN THIS PARLIAMENT, WHICH WILL BE PROLOGUED NOVEMBER 12, TO COMPLETE ACTION ON THIS LEGISLATION, BUT THE WILL TO FIND ACCOMMODATION STILL APPEARS TO BE LACKING.

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT EMPLOYMENT SECRETARY FOOT AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT BE ESPECIALLY DISTURBED IF LORDS SUCCEEDS IN BLOCKING THE BILL, SINCE THE DELAY ENTAILED WILL ONLY BE FOUR MONTHS, AND, AS WE NOTED PREVIOUSLY, THE BILL CAN THEN BE APPROVED IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIONS WOULD FIND THE ORIGINAL VERSION marginally preferable.

3. AS THE DRAMA OF THE TRADE UNION BILL HAS SPUN OUT, WE HAVE NOTED SUBSTANTIAL FALL OFF IN MEDIA ATTENTION WHILE TEMPERS AMONG BACKBENCH LABOR MPS HAVE COOLED perceptibly. WHILE RESORT TO THE PARLIAMENT ACT WILL CERTAINLY GENERATE VIGOROUS CALLS FOR REFORM OF THE UPPER HOUSE, THERE IS GROWING FEELING AMONG LABOR BACKBENCHERS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN THAT THE GAME WOULD NOT BE WORTH THE CANDLE. GIVEN THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS EXPECTED TO INTRODUCE AN AMBITIOUS LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM IN THE NEXT PARLIAMENT, INCLUDING ESPECIALLY CONTENTIOUS AND TIME-CONSUMING DEVOLUTION LEGISLATION. IT SEEMS INCREASINGLY UNLIKELY THAT GOVERNMENT WILL SPONSOR LEGISLATION FOR THE REFORM OF LORDS, FURTHER ADDING TO LEGISLATIVE LOAD. IT APPEARS, ACCORDINGLY, THAT WHAT WAS PERCEIVED AS STEAM BEHIND A REFORM MOVE MAY TURN OUT TO BE NOTHING MORE THAN HOT AIR.

RICHARDSON

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Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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